

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 14, 2007

**SUPREME COURT APPOINTS MICHAEL PELLETIER STATE
APPELLATE DEFENDER**

The Illinois Supreme Court announced Friday the appointment of Michael J. Pelletier to the Office of State Appellate Defender to succeed Theodore A. Gottfried who has held the office with distinction since its inception 35 years ago.

Mr. Pelletier, 57, has spent his entire legal career with the State Appellate Defender, first in Ottawa, and then in Chicago. For the past 20 years, he has been Deputy Defender in the First Judicial District and chief administrator in the Chicago office over a staff which includes 100 attorneys and 24 support persons.

“We couldn’t be happier,” said Chief Justice Robert R. Thomas. “Mike is well-known to the Court, and his work both as an advocate and as an administrator has always been outstanding. Under Ted Gottfried’s leadership, the Office of the State Appellate Defender has developed into an agency that consistently provides quality, dedicated counsel to thousands of indigent clients.

“If anyone is up to carrying on Ted’s legacy, it’s Mike Pelletier. He has done a masterful job of running the Appellate Defender’s Chicago office, and we are confident that he will bring the same talent, commitment and vision to his new position as State Appellate Defender.”

The Office of the Appellate Defender was created by Illinois statute to handle all the criminal appeals of indigent defendants in the Illinois Appellate Court and the Illinois Supreme Court. Its caseload now consists of about 3,000 a year.

Mr. Pelletier began with the Office as an assistant defender in Ottawa, in 1976 and transferred to Chicago as an assistant defender in 1978. He was one of two assistant defenders who represented John Wayne Gacy on direct appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court.

Mr. Pelletier was named Deputy Defender in the Chicago, Cook County office in 1987 and has administered the office ever since, including its expansion from 29 lawyers to 100 assistant appellate defenders.

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“It is an honor and a privilege to succeed Ted Gottfried,” said Mr. Pelletier. “The challenge for me is to continue to maintain the quality representation that he and the office has provided for our clients around the state, and I want to continue to serve the courts well.

“I want to try to find ways to improve the process, as well When I came out of law school, I made a commitment to serve the public interest, and I am fortunate in satisfying that desire with work through the Office of the Appellate Defender.”

Mr. Pelletier graduated with his *juris doctor* degree in 1976 from The John Marshall Law School. He received a B.A. degree in political science from Northern Illinois University in 1972. He is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court and the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. He is a member of the Illinois State Bar Association and its Criminal Justice Section and a former member of the Section Council. He also is a member of the Appellate Lawyers Association and a former member of its Board of Directors. Mr. Pelletier also belongs to the National Legal Aid and Defender Association.

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(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312-793-2323)